

## ODE TO THE SAGES OF PURE LAND

Wisdom as vast as the boundless sea,  
Bodhi as high and wide as Meru peak,  
Their halos bright beyond sunbeam,  
Surpassing the moon's luminous gleam.  
  
Their hearts white and serene like snowy hills,  
Their patience as enduring as the fields,  
Their calm minds like pristine waters  
That wash away the defiling dusts,  
Their profound insight as keen as fire,  
Burning away all worry and fraught,  
Non abiding and breezing o'er any mire,  
Sounds of Dharma: striking lightning,  
Warning the deluded to wisdom ripen,  
Pouring forth truth like soothing sweet dew,  
Their grace like canopies of Linden trees,  
Cool shades of respite for you and for me.

## REQUIEM HYMN

By the Grace of Amitabha,  
You shall transcend the Samsara,  
This mantra is your Sila,  
Your Samadhi, and your Prajna,  
The shield that demons fear,  
The call that all yearn to hear,  
The sword that slices the Gordian knot  
Of lustful desire and crushing fraught.  
Thus, with one heart in Him seek,  
Seek rebirth in Ultimate Bliss,  
And save yourself from the abyss  
Of the dismal infernal Naraka  
By resolving for with resolute faith  
The profound Dharma of Amitabha,  
His Forty Eight Vows and Grace!  
Dither not and seek in haste,  
Leap high above cruel Dukkha,  
Beyond evil karma and King Yama,  
And become a Bodhisattva  
Standing atop the lofty Lotus Dais  
Beside Amita Tathagata,  
Beside merciful Avalokitesvara,  
And by the wise Mahathamaprata,  
And at that time your mind will know  
That you have always been Amitabha,  
And your birthright is to enjoy,  
Now and forever, the eternal delight  
Of the Land of Sole and Lasting Light.

## The Tree of Sin

Swirling around in a cauldron  
Filled with lust, avarice and vice,  
Fools indulge in the forbidden  
Fruit of loot and cruelty and wrath,  
They bathe their hearts in evil and  
Pave the way to pain and torment,  
And so the tree of sin takes root,  
Watered by greed and fed by hate,  
Growing tall under glooming clouds,  
Woeful decay is its blossom  
And infernal rebirth the fruit!

## Bodhi Resolve

Yearn for Bodhi for life's a dream,  
A dark fleeting phantom, and a  
Shadowy hollow illusion,  
Filled with nightmares of greed and fear,  
Of Love and loss and scorching  
Fires of burning ire and desire,  
Of hard times that haunt and linger.  
All dharmas are but dew and mist,  
Ready to fade when the Sun of  
Inner Wisdom shines and pours forth,  
Revealing the blooming lotus  
And the Seven Jeweled Lagoon  
Of the Land of Ultimate Bliss.

## **Lute of Temperance**

The Middle Way is not extreme  
It is similar to lute strings  
Too tight and they will snap and break  
Too loose and they will never play  
But when tuned and tempered just right  
Vivid notes can leap in delight

## **Healing Destiny**

Your fate is not sealed,  
For the scale of karma  
That decides woe and weal,  
Can be altered by Dharma.

Pious and good deeds,  
Cause all woes to yield  
To joy and great weal,  
'Tis how fortune is healed!

## Malice behind the Mask

The esteemed guests streamed into the candle lit  
Foyer and dissolved into a sea of idle courtly ritual,  
Landowners, majors, magistrates, slender maidens  
And fair matrons all slithered into the modestly gilded hall so  
Discreetly adorned by understated gluttony. Their lofty manners,  
Their shield ; their feigned courtesy, disguise for icy hearts.

Only a thin veneer of silky decorum coats their acrid tongues,  
For them, honest men are but emotional beasts to be  
Snared and skinned by slander most gleeful and vicious,  
Leaving in their wake their perverse masterpieces  
Hollow shells that would make a taxidermist proud.

Petaled confetti is set adrift upon powdered faces and intricate wigs lost in  
Laughter, Chatter, and the Clatter of soles ; and as Measured gaits of the Minuet  
Mingled 'Mongst The Music and Morphed into the Milieu, well bred Ladies  
politely pricked with veiled Slights of envy, and the men indulged their ornery  
humor, turning giddy at the sight of Misery, their openly secret Delight.

Meandering through the dense meadow of decadent masters are the servants  
Who carry Silver platters of pheasants and plum wine. Their obedient  
Stony facades hide hearts That lust after larceny. Birds of the same feather,  
Separated only by station.

Alas! Heaven cries as it looks down to judge.....King Yama lets out a sigh and  
asks:

In this hall of monsters, who is modest still?  
In this world of wickedness, who is upright still?  
In this land of lies.....who is honest still?

## Comment

Poem inspired by the Taoist Treatise of Response and Retribution moral maxims that warns against: **Hiding cruelty and malice behind a gentle facade** (offense 66, page 14), **To envy those doing well, wishing for them poverty and disgrace** (page 11, offense 42), **To indulge in excess revelry and luxury** (offense 52, page 12) and to **Secretly plot to hurt the good and kind** (Offense 2, page 4).

The Treatise also teaches that based on the severity of an offense, the offender will be punished by Heaven by having either a period(s) of 3 months or 12 years shaved off his lifespan and accompanying misfortunes (i.e. legal, disasters, illness etc.). Likewise, virtue will lead to an increase of lifespan (by periods of 100 days or 12 years) and various blessings such as wealth, health and prosperity etc.

**Public Domain translation of the Treatise of Response and Retribution:**

<https://archive.org/details/Treatise2014Edition>

## Twilight in Paradise

The lament of an evil man on the eve of death:

“It is twilight in paradise  
And the end of my idle life  
Of lavish pleasure is nigh.  
My dreams benighted,  
Crumbling before my eyes,  
I sorely regret frittering away  
Those calm prosperous days  
Of youth, wealth and peace  
On plunder and wicked deeds,  
Wrathful violence and conspiracies,  
On fraud, libel and charlatanry,  
And slender courtesans who steal  
Lascivious glances and feelings.  
Now I stand before the abyss,  
Old, withered and ready to slip  
From my blissful mortal coil,  
And into the infernal boiling oil.  
Alas! I now rue my failure to do  
Even a single upright deed!”

## **Loyal or Ingrate**

**An ugly contraption, but you didn't mind ; a temporary solution of the permanent kind. It served you well in those hard years when you were most unwell, when you needed utility more than beauty, economies more than luxury, and loyalty more than the flattery of perfumed orators.**

**But now that the barren desert has been crossed, and new shiny things vie to seduce and usurp, will you forget your roots and the old that gave you fruit? Will you join the vast ranks of rakish ingrates, or will you prove loyal and true, and hold onto the hand of a wilting friend?**

### **Comment:**

Poem inspired by the Taoist Treatise of Response and Retribution moral maxim that warns against **Forgetting the Old Once Getting the New**.

The Treatise also teaches that based on the severity of the offense, the offender will be punished by Heaven by having either a period(s) of 3 months or 12 years shaved off his lifespan and accompanying misfortunes (i.e. legal, disasters, illness etc.). Likewise, virtue will lead to an increase of lifespan (by periods of 100 days or 12 years) and various blessings such as wealth, health and prosperity etc.

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## Lamentations of a Slow Learning Sinner

If only I hadn't been a phoney,  
If only I wasn't so ornery,  
If only I had lived more holy,  
Maybe I wouldn't now be so lonely,  
And abandoned to infamy.

If only I were not so haughty,  
Not so quick and eager to demean,  
If only I hadn't sneered so gloatingly,  
Perhaps I wouldn't have been  
So coldly betrayed by my cronies,  
And reduced to such lowly misery.

And if only I did not so boldly  
Lust after that slender trophy,  
I wouldn't now be a bereft nobody,  
Deprived of my loyal humble wife  
The only one ever true to me  
In my entire life.....

Now I know.....if only I had just....  
.....just.....just.....  
I wouldn't be ....be drifting in regret

Today!